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Bill forces response to climate change, energy use

Dr. Todd L. Sack

The Florida Energy Commission is working with the Legislature and other state agencies to expedite writing a climate change response plan and an energy policy for the Sunshine State.

This will add to the many government and private initiatives already under way in Florida. The plans we make will change the way that Floridians use and think about energy for the next 50 years.

The FEC was created by the 2006 Florida Legislature. The FEC's Climate Change Advisory Group is comprised of energy and climate scholars, environmental leaders and industry experts, who are meeting regularly.

The advisory group will meet May 8 in Tampa, and invites public participation. At its meeting last month in Jacksonville, members of the public expressed a strong sense of urgency to address climate change.

The message was clear: "Stop planning to act, and start acting."

In response, Sen. Lee Constantine, R-Altamonte Springs, the only legislator who is a member of the FEC, has included an answer in SB 2666. If passed, this bill would directly instruct the Florida Energy Commission to accelerate the development of a comprehensive climate change action plan, and to report to the Legislature this December.

This year's report would include the first of a series of recommendations that would be produced over several years as we respond to environmental, scientific and economic conditions.

The report will propose specific legislation to address greenhouse gases such as methane and carbon dioxide, renewable energy, energy conservation, transportation, building design, energy supply, energy transmission and other topics.

SB 2666 will direct the Florida Energy Commission to produce an energy plan that will allow Florida to join the 22 other states that already have moved in this direction.

These states have found that addressing climate change and energy use comprehensively is likely to result in positive long-term economic and environmental benefits.

Making Florida attractive to renewable energy industries also could bring jobs and out-of-state dollars.

The FEC is striving to provide a well-rounded set of recommendations that will promote affordable energy, environmental protection and economic growth.

Floridians can find FEC meeting and contact information on the Florida Energy Commission's Web site at www.floridaenergycommission.gov. Bottom of Form

